

## NPS Common Learning Portal (CLP) SUCCESS STORY

### Using Data to Discover and Fill Knowledge Gaps



Brandi Stewart  
Education Program Manager  
Death Valley National Park

Brandi Stewart is an Education Program Manager currently on detail with the Mather Training Center, where she is supporting the Interpretive Development Program (IDP) as a Training Specialist. The IDP offers curriculum-based education learning opportunities for park educators through webinars and virtual courses that highlight promising practices. While on detail, Brandi has been curating content for the IDP's "For Educators, By Educators" Webinar Series group.

## Challenge

The purpose of the "For Educators, By Educators" Webinar Series group is to establish opportunities for educators to share and learn about topics that directly impact youth and teacher engagement. The webinars are free and hosted by educators from parks across the country who are excited to share new ideas and practices on education programming. Brandi has been helping to support this group, whose members often work by themselves without direct, regular contact with other educators (i.e., they might be on an Interpretation and Education team, but they are the only specialist in education programming). The CLP has been particularly helpful in building a community among these educators, who are geographically dispersed.

As a detailee, Brandi has been reviewing the resources available on the CLP to her peers, determining which are still relevant and which are outdated and need revising. Because there are so many curriculum-based resources available to educators, Brandi observed that her peers were having difficulty sifting through everything to find what they were looking for and determining what resources were particularly new and innovative. Brandi knew that she didn't want to continue adding more content and confusion into their day, so she started to consider how she could surface the most valuable content that the IDP already has and devise a plan to enhance those resources for future use.

## Solution

Brandi connected with the CLP Team, who provided her with Google Analytics for all of the Curriculum-based Education resources on the CLP, so she could start to make data-informed decisions about what to do with the IDP's content – keep it as is, edit and update, or archive/delete. She has also supported the CLP Team in developing a Content Maintenance Rubric to help other CLP Content Teams determine what to do with their content based on measures that walk them through evaluating a resource's relevancy, quality, educational value, and usage, among other criteria.

In her analysis, Brandi reviewed content that people were spending a considerable amount of time engaging with. She identified one particular resource on the importance of using visual aids, which had a high view count – many people were clicking on a link to take them to the page hosting the resource – but low engagement – CLP users were spending on average less than 40 seconds on the page. This trend showed Brandi that people are likely interested in best practices for using visual aids to promote discussion with students, but that the resource itself wasn't what they expected and wasn't capturing their attention. Brandi was only able to surface this trend through the use of analytics, which is already helping give her a better idea of where the IDP should spend their energy developing future resources.

## Outcome

Brandi's experience highlights the importance of using data to discover and fill knowledge and information gaps in content the NPS has. For the Visual Aid resource, Brandi surmised that while the article is useful, it's not entirely relatable – it's missing the application to a park setting, which would help educators understand how to best use this type of resource to have discussions with students when they are visiting their park. Based on her identification of information gaps, she is not only determining which content to keep, revise, or delete, but also considering how to curate content on particular topics to give people a better picture of how things relate to each other and can be integrated into their programs.

“By using data, I'm able to pull out themes on what people are looking for and figure out how to curate resources on topics so they don't have to find information piecemeal – we can give them a comprehensive set of resources that are on demand and will be a huge asset to them.”

